

Sociology 117: Principles of Sociology

Fall 2008

Whitman College

M,T,Th 11-11:50, Maxey 310

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What is sociology, and how will we approach the discipline this semester? Sociology is the study of human group behavior, to put it simply. But it is more complex than that. This semester, we will take a whirlwind tour of many facets of sociology, from examining how we as individuals fit into society and its institutions, to explaining how people or groups can be deviant or create problems in society. While it may seem as if we jump quickly from topic to topic, the whole picture that emerges by the end of the semester should give you a pretty good glimpse into sociology as a discipline – its theories, concepts, and methods. There is a rough theme for the semester – socialization – which will be examined via books about social class and family life, high school experiences with consumption and status, and child and home caretaking from immigrants' perspectives. We'll read sociological books and articles that help us answer the following questions: **How are children raised? What do adolescents' relationships with each other tell us about society? And what invisible inequality structures are at play in care work?** While we won't be able to cover all the topics that sociologists study, we'll have some continuity through the semester.

What do I get to read?

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. 2001. *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. University of California Press.

Annette Lareau. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press.

Murray Milner. 2006. *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: American Teenagers, Schools, and the Culture of Consumption*. Routledge.

Plus some online sources available on the Soc 117 CLEO website. To access the site, go to

<https://cleo.whitman.edu/portal/> and login using your email username and password. Select SOC117 A F08 from your list of active sites and navigate to the information you want. The syllabus is also located on this site.

All books are available in the bookstore.

What am I expected to learn in this class?

By the end of this course, I expect you to be able to:

1. Understand and describe sociology as a discipline; that is, to describe what sociologists do and explain why it is important.
2. Analyze the world sociologically, both broadly and in everyday life; that is, to utilize sociological theories and concepts to interpret the world, and to employ sociological methods in doing so.
3. Understand yourself better by examining your own life and experience using a sociological perspective and “the sociological imagination.”

How do my professor and I talk to each other?

Always feel free to e-mail (janninmy) or call (x4952) me about anything concerning the course, and I will do the same. Please visit me during office hours or set up an appointment. I sometimes send messages about my classes via e-mail class listserves, including reminders, assignment modifications, and syllabus changes (for which you are responsible)—so **read your e-mail!**

As a professor, I spend my time doing 4 jobs: I teach, I do research and am involved in professional sociology, I serve on committees and do service for the college, and I am an academic adviser to students. I also have a life outside of my paid work ☺, which includes a great husband named Neal, a very precocious 4-year-old named Aaron, and a slightly psychotic dog named Maggie (all of whom will be brought up in various lectures throughout the semester). Please be considerate of my time, and I'll be respectful of yours. If you need to talk with me, feel free to set up an appointment or come during my office hours. If you miss a scheduled in-person appointment with me, though, don't assume that I can reschedule. You can call me at home, too, preferably before 9 p.m. Email is fine, of course. I check email every day during the day, but usually not in the evenings or on weekends.

How will I be evaluated in this class?

Evaluation of students will come from the course requirements listed below. Students will be notified by mid-semester or thereafter if they are receiving a D or F, but any student at any time can come and see me to discuss progress.

Should I give feedback to my professor?

Feel free to provide comments at any time to me on how you think the course is going: what needs improving, what needs more emphasis, how the course is set-up, any special needs you may have, etc. This will provide you a voice to determine what you get out of the class.

What happens if I turn in a paper late?

For every day a paper is late, beginning just after the time it is due, I take off 2% (out of 100%). Often, it is worth losing 2 percentage points if it means you will be turning in a more polished paper a day late. You decide what would work best for you. For those of you on the opposite end of the “turning-things-on-time” spectrum, **I’ll gladly accept and make comments on drafts of papers at least 72 hours (*that’s 3 full days*) before the due date. I am unable to read drafts carefully enough unless they are given to me according to that timeframe, so please don’t ask ☺.**

What are my course requirements?

1. Research Poster Project [done in sections] (300 points)
2. Sociological Autobiography (200 points)
3. Midterm exam (150 points) and Final exam (200 points)
4. In-Class (150 points)

Total points: 1,000

At the end of the semester, how can I tell what grade I will get?

930-1000 points= A	900-929 = A-	880-899 = B+	830-879 = B
800-829 = B-	780-799 = C+	730-779 = C	700-729 = C-
600-699 = D	599 and below = F		

Can you tell me more about all of these exciting course requirements?*

Research Poster Project (300 points total)

This semester you will be doing a large project that is based on both individual and group efforts. After individually writing a literature review/annotated bibliography on a chosen topic, you will conduct original research with a partner on that topic (in the form of surveys), analyze the data, and present a write-up (in poster form) to the class on one of the last class days. To begin, you will write an individual literature review on a topic that will be arranged with Professor Janning. Then, you will begin your group work on data collection, analysis, and poster write-up with someone who is working on a similar topic. While working in groups has its drawbacks, the desired goal of completing empirical research in one semester requires collaborative efforts. Plus, there’s plenty of the grade that is based on your individual work, so fear not! Here’s how the total of 300 points breaks down:

Individual Literature Review: 100 points

Application for Research: 50 points

Group Poster and Presentation: 150 points

Each group will consist of 2 or 3 students. The survey data will be collected as a class. The survey respondents will most likely be our class, and/or perhaps one or two other introductory classes. There will be ten general topics from which to choose. More details will follow as each step is introduced.

Sociological Autobiography (200 points): This 3-4 page assignment will present an opportunity to see how you see yourself within society, how, as C. Wright Mills put it, your *biography* fits in with *history*. You will **complete 1 out of 2 possible assignments**, with due dates noted below in the course schedule. If you choose to do the first one, you will be writing about social class and childhood (Lareau’s book). If you choose to do the second one, you will be

* General grading criteria for all writing assignments include items such as: turned in on time, typed and formatted correctly, includes all necessary components of assignment, is written sociologically, has correct spelling and grammar, shows insight, creativity, and ability to make sociological connections.

writing about status and adolescence (Milner's book). A handout describing these assignments will be given to you. Decide early on which one you will do, and mark it in your calendars. **Re-writes will not be allowed.**

Midterm exam (150 points) and Final exam (200 points): A midterm exam is scheduled for October 28th. A Final exam, scheduled for Wednesday, December 17 from 2-4 p.m., will cover material from classes after the midterm. Exam format will be a combination of objective components and essay questions. Exams may not be made up if missed, unless there is a college-approved excuse.

In-Class (150 points): Class participation – do it. Your grade will be much better if you do... This includes attendance (tell me if you're going to be absent; if I notice you're absent often, I reserve the right to subtract points from your final participation grade – most likely one letter grade for each absence after 3 unexcused). This also includes active listening and engagement in class discussions, participation within and/or outside of class (via e-mail or office visits – for those of you who prefer to be less vocal in class), making productive comments that are not tangential, being prepared if called upon, and various in-class assignments and small group tasks. You will get an A in participation if: you don't have more than 3 unexcused absences, you actively speak in class (or meet with me outside of class or via e-mail to discuss things), you respect other students' opinions, you actively listen and do not dominate discussion, you show a genuine interest in the subject matter, you complete all in-class/small writing assignments and small group work effectively and well. Be exceptional in all of these areas, and you'll do fine in terms of participation. Be less than exceptional, and your grade will reflect that accordingly. *Even if you are rarely absent and regularly listen attentively -- if you rarely or never make productive comments in our large-class discussions, rarely or never e-mail or meet with me to discuss concepts in place of large-class participation, and only participate when you are in a small group, do not expect higher than a B in participation.* In class, please respect others' voices and present your views productively in order to make this class interesting, engaging, and intellectual. Part of the participation grade will be:

- *Reading Summaries/Presentations:* We will be reading 3 books this semester, two of which are Lareau's *Unequal Childhoods* and Hondagneu-Sotelo's *Doméstica*. With these books, one day will be devoted to discussing large portions of reading. These multiple chapters will be divided among you, so that you're not inundated with too much reading. For these lengthier reading assignments, students will work in small groups to present the material to classmates in both written and oral form. In these cases, you will not be responsible for reading the other chapters, *although you may be tested on material that is discussed in class about those chapters*. More details will follow.

SOC 117 (FALL 2007) SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS

T 9/2

**SOCIOLOGY: KEY THEORISTS, PARADIGMS,
AND CONCEPTS**

Th 9/4 How do Sociologists Think?
E-reserve readings (Berger "Sociology as
Individual Pastime;" Mills "The Sociological
Imagination")

M 9/8 Sociological Theories &
Socialization
CLEo readings (socialization wikipedia;
Macdonis "Sociology: Perspective, Theory, and
Method" [note – this is in 3 parts on the CLEo
site])

T 9/9 Social Structure & Culture
CLEo readings (Lindsey & Beach "Social
Structure"[note – this is in 2 parts on the CLEo
site]; Becker "Culture: A Sociological View")

Th 9/11 Structural Functionalism
CLEo readings (Durkheim "The Division of
Labor;" Merton "Manifest and Latent
Functions;" Gans "The Uses of Poverty: The
Poor Pay All")

M 9/15 Conflict Theory
CLEo reading (Marx & Engels "Manifesto of
the Communist Party")

T 9/16 Symbolic Interaction
CLEo readings (dramaturgy wikipedia; Goffman
"The Presentation of Self;" Mead "The Social
Self")

Th 9/18 NO CLASS

RESEARCHING SOCIOLOGY, PART I

M 9/22 Research Methods and Terms
CLEo reading (Kanagy & Kraybill "The
Methods of Sociology")

T 9/23 Information Literacy – no reading
MEET IN MAXEY COMPUTER LAB (A-J)

Th 9/25 Information Literacy – no reading
MEET IN MAXEY COMPUTER LAB (K-Z)

(careful – lots of reading next week!)

**HOW ARE CHILDREN RAISED?
SOCIAL CLASS AND FAMILIES**

M 9/29 Defining Class and Seeing Status
CLEo readings (Halnon "Poor Chic: The
Rational Consumption of Poverty;" Davis &
Moore "Some Principles of Stratification" Boyd
"Viewing American Class Divisions Through
MySpace and Facebook")

T 9/30 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapters 1-2 & Appendix A & B

Th 10/2 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapter 3
***Specific Topic Chosen for Poster Research
Project***

M 10/6 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapters 4-5

T 10/7 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapters 6-7

Th 10/9 Unequal Childhoods
One Chapter from Lareau Chapters 8-11 [TBA]

Th 10/16 Unequal Childhoods
Lareau Chapter 12

**WHAT DO ADOLESCENTS' RELATIONSHIPS
WITH EACH OTHER TELL US ABOUT SOCIETY?
SCHOOLS, STATUS, AND CONSUMPTION**

M 10/20 Adolescence and Status
Milner Introduction & Chapters 1-2 & Appendix
II

T 10/21 Adolescence and Status
Milner Chapter 3
Autobiography #1 due

Th 10/23 Adolescence and Status
Milner Chapter 4; CLEo reading (England
"Hooking Up and Forming Romantic
Relationships on Today's College Campuses")

M 10/27 Adolescence and Status
Milner Chapters 5-7

T 10/28
Midterm exam

RESEARCHING SOCIOLOGY, PART II

Th 10/30 Sampling and Survey Design
CLEo reading (Babbie "Survey Research")

M 11/3 Sampling and Survey Design
Literature review done (individual assignment for the poster project)

WHAT INVISIBLE INEQUALITY STRUCTURES ARE AT PLAY IN CHILD CARE? RACE, GENDER, IMMIGRATION, AND CARE WORK

T 11/4 Latina Workers in Los Angeles
Hondagneu-Sotelo Preface & ch. 1

Th 11/6 Latina Workers in Los Angeles
Hondagneu-Sotelo ch. 2
Autobiography #2 due

M 11/10 Latina Workers in Los Angeles
Hondagneu-Sotelo one chapter from chs. 3-5
[TBA]

T 11/11 Latina Workers in Los Angeles
Hondagneu-Sotelo chs. 6-7
Application for Research due

Th 11/13 Latina Workers in Los Angeles
Hondagneu-Sotelo ch. 8

**CURRENT RESEARCH IN SOCIOLOGY:
STUDENT TOPIC CHOICES
[E.G., ENVIRONMENT, SPORTS, RELIGION,
CRIME AND DELINQUENCY]**

M 11/17
CLEo reading TBA

T 11/18
CLEo reading TBA

Th 11/20
CLEo reading TBA

M 12/1
CLEo reading TBA

T 12/2
CLEo reading TBA

STUDENT RESEARCH POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Th 12/4
Poster presentations

M 12/8
Poster presentations

T 12/9
Poster presentations

Th 12/11
Poster presentations

Final Exam Wednesday, December 17th from 2-4 p.m. in Maxey 310